

Detroit Willkie Rally Picketed by Partisans Of Gerald L. K. Smith

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GOP Leader to Speak
To Presbyterian
Assembly Tonight

By the Associated Press.

DETROIT, May 31.—Wendell L. Willkie, Republican presidential candidate in 1940, as the guest of the State's Republican leaders at a public reception yesterday, shook about 2,000 hands in a 90-minute receiving line. But whether those hands would mark a presidential ballot for him in 1944 was a subject which no one would discuss—for the record.

Mr. Willkie, here to address the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States tonight, was tendered the reception at a downtown hotel as "titular head of the party." An expression which political observers deduced was designed to keep clear of commitments in his behalf for 1944.

In a preliminary luncheon attended by party workers and later at a press conference Mr. Willkie declared emphatically that "I do not expect to discuss any politics in Michigan."

Hotel Picketed.

To this line he hewed throughout the afternoon, even eschewing any predictions on what the Democrats might do next year.

The closest he came to political remarks was when, the reception line having broken up, he took note of a picket line which had been thrown about the hotel.

"I understand," said Mr. Willkie to several hundred persons still standing in the ballroom, "that you were picketed as you entered the hotel by a group headed by the secretary of the Rev. Gerald L. K. Smith (recent unsuccessful Republican and "sticker" candidate for Senator and head of the so-called Committee of One Million).

"I can't tell you how proud and happy that makes me feel. I doubt if any other man ever was so fortunate in the opposition he made. If I ever had any doubt about the rightness of the things I stand for, their opposition completely convinces me of my rightness.

Calls Pickets Helpful.

"As you go out, please convey my thanks to those pickets and ask them to come around again. They are very helpful."

The remarks were interrupted by applause and laughter, but the departing guests found no pickets, for they had vanished after an hour's marching with banners reading: "Willkie owned by Hollywood and Wall Street," "Willkie, New Deal Stooze"; "Willkie, Communist Bootlicker" and "Michigan Republicans Against Willkie."

The leader of the pickets identified himself to reporters as Bernard Doman, Mr. Smith's secretary.